



Assistant Regional Security Officer - Investigators

Assistant regional security officer-investigators (ARSO-Is) are global investigative resources for DSS domestic field offices and in turn, U.S. law enforcement partners.

ARSO-Is are special agents who support DSS operations at more than 100 locations around the globe. They investigate passport and visa fraud, assist in investigating crimes against U.S. citizens, and train and collaborate with foreign nation law enforcement and immigration authorities.

122 ARSO-Is at
109 Posts in
77 countries
129 criminal fraud
investigators

68 investigative
assistants
11 partner nation
vetted police units

LIAISON WORK

In addition to cooperating with U.S. federal and local law enforcement authorities, ARSO-Is work with foreign law enforcement officials, prosecutors, immigration authorities, airline personnel, and tourism officials to combat transnational organized crime. Human trafficking, terrorism, and human and weapons smuggling are some of the transnational crimes that often involve U.S. visa and passport fraud.

30,000+ requests
for assistance fulfilled

300+ fugitive returns

1,000+ arrests and assisted arrests

- 170+ document vendor arrests
- 20+ human trafficking arrests
- 130+ human smuggling arrests
- 10 terrorism-related arrests

300

Approximately
300 recommended
passport and
consular report
of birth abroad
denials

12,500+

12,500+ recommended
visa revocations
and refusals

INVESTIGATIONS

Because of DSS' global reach, ARSO-Is can target document vendors, smugglers, and traffickers at the source of their illicit operations overseas, deterring fraudulent practices that disrupt criminals' and terrorists' mobility and protect the U.S. homeland.

TRAINING

ARSO-Is provide training for DSS, U.S., foreign partners on travel document security features, fraudulent document and imposter detection methods, and suspect traveler profiles. As a result of ARSO-I program training and guidance, foreign officials have disrupted human smuggling rings, interdicted foreign terrorist fighters, and captured high-profile fugitives.

DENIED

33,000+ foreign partners trained

11,000+ State Department partners trained



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CASE EXAMPLES

ARSO-I BUCHAREST TARGETED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CRIMINAL NETWORKS IN ROMANIA.

In 2019, the ARSO-I at the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, collaborated with the Romanians and other partners to identify and arrest members of a country-based organized crime group that used fraudulent U.S. visas to perpetuate human smuggling, trafficking, violent crimes and international, industrial-scale ATM skimming. ARSO-I Bucharest also worked with Moldovan officials to thwart similar criminal networks seeking to exploit Romanian identification and travel documents. Upon learning of the scheme, the Bucharest police arrested and prosecuted members of the criminal network.

ARSO-I LIMA UNCOVERED AND STOPPED A TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION.

In 2019, the ARSO-I team at the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru, traveled several hours to a small, remote city in Peru to train and build relationships with local law enforcement and immigration officials. The training paid off, as one of the trained officials shortly thereafter identified an imposter using a stolen U.S. passport. That tip turned into a full investigation in which ARSO-I Lima and the embassy's vetted police unit uncovered an international human smuggling and trafficking network. The team quickly shut down the network, and the Peruvian National Police arrested the ringleaders.

ARSO-I CHENNAI PARTNERED WITH INDIA TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING.

In 2019, the ARSO-I at the U.S. Consulate General in Chennai, India, organized several training sessions with DSS' Indian partners to combat transnational crimes such as human trafficking and smuggling that occur in or originate from India. For instance, one workshop provided more than 250 Indian immigration officials with the knowledge and techniques to identify victims of human trafficking and/or smuggling and to demonstrate how criminal elements use fraudulent U.S. and Indian travel documents to facilitate their crimes. The ARSO-I team used detailed case studies of current and recent investigations originating from India that directly affect U.S. national security to help participants gain a better understanding of the patterns and methods smuggling networks use.

ARSO-I KAMPALA HELPED BRING DOWN MAJOR FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT VENDOR RING.

In June 2019, the ARSO-I at the U.S. Embassy in Kampala, Uganda, worked with the Ugandan Police Force (UPF) to take down a major international document vendor ring. Upon searching one of the fake document production facilities, the team uncovered evidence that the criminal ring had fabricated several fake businesses and religious organizations that dozens of non-immigrant visa applicants had used as documentation to travel to the United States. The UPF arrested members of the criminal network who in turn led them to the ringleader.

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